(c) whether the Committee on Disputes has looked into this matter and if so, with what results ;

(d) whether the licence fee paid by MTNL was treated as taxable revenue and would not be covered under the standard deductions ; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) to (e) A dispute has arisen between Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) and the Income Tax Department over some income tax claims raised against the former.

Income tax Department has disallowed the license fee paid by MTNL to Government of India as a tax deductible business expenditure. As a result, over and above the taxes already paid by the company, IT authorities have raised additional demand of Rs. 91.39 crores and Rs. 209 crores for the Assessment Years 1996-97 & 1997-98 respectively. MTNL has disputed both these demands.

The Committee on Disputes has allowed MTNL to appeal against the orders of Income Tax Department for the Assessment Year 1996-97 in the Income Tax Appelate Tribunal. For the year 1997-98 the matter is before the income tax appellate authority.

The license fee paid by MTNL to the Govt. of India was treated as a tax deductible expenditure from 1986-87 up to 1994-95, a period of 9 years. Since the license fee payment is a precondition for MTNL to be in the business, the expenditure on this account has to be treated as valid business expenditure U/S 37(1) of the IT Act. It has been rightly allowed by IT authorities in the previous years as a legitimate tax deductible business expenditure. However, for the year 1996-97 & 1997-98 the license fee paid by MTNL has been treated by the IT authorities as taxable revenue, which MTNL has disputed.

Protection of Monuments

*360. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU) : Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Monuments being plundered" which appeared in the Times of India of 20th February, 2000;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) the action taken/being taken to protect the monuments and remove the encroachments ?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No encroachment is reported in the protection portions of the fort wall (Jahanpanah). At Khirki Masjid land acquired by the ASI for providing a proper approach road to the monument has been encroached upon.

(c) Invariably the assistance of the State Government and the local authorities is sought to help remove the encroachments and appropriate legal action is taken wherever necessary.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Discrimination in the promotion of stewards

2599. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that from 1969 onwards the basic qualification for stewards is graduation and for airhostesses the basic qualification is matriculate ;

(b) if so, the reasons for promoting airhostesses as manager or senior managers ahead of stewards who are graduate; and

(c) the reasons for graduate males who are managers now being made to work as subordinate of those junior matriculate females in the office on the basis of gender only ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV) : (a) Indian Airlines :—

Prior to 1986, the eligibility criteria in respect of educational qualification for recruitment to the post of Airhostesses and Flight Stewards was Matriculation or Higher Secondary or equivalent examination of recognised board. This criteria was last revised in the year 1986 and the basic qualification was enhanced to minimum Graduation for both Airhostesses and Flight Stewards.